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ABSTRACT

This leaflet, developed by the Division of Planning and Research, Los Angeles City Schools, recognizes the need for better communication between schools and parents and pupils, particularly in the area of reporting pupil progress. The guide points out some of the ways in which parents, pupils and teachers can work together to assist children. Topics discussed include: teacher preparation for a conference; conducting the conference (individual as well as group); and record-keeping sheets for kindergarten and for grades one and 2. It is anticipated that parental expectations for their children will be conditioned largely by the outcomes of conferencing. (Author/CJ)

CONFERENCING:

AN APPROACH TO REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

****

AN INSTRUCTIONAL BULLETIN

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LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH
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TO THE TEACHER

Teachers, administrators, parents, and pupils themselves have recognized the need to re-examine traditional methods of reporting pupil progress and of considering other ways of evaluating and describing pupil growth and development. Conferencing has come to be considered a desirable method of exchanging information and providing for two- or three-way communication, which is not always possible using other reporting methods.

Conferencing is designed to develop an evaluation system that will:

- Permit the individual child to take pride in his accomplishments and will enable him to view himself as an important and worthwhile individual.
- Be positive and meaningful to parents and teachers as well.
- Provide the flexibility that enables each school staff to report pupil progress on the basis of the school's philosophy and its related curriculum.
- Pinpoint areas of success and areas of need in a positive, face-to-face relationship.
- Meet the needs of a given school and community.

Conferences permit a direct approach to evaluation, leading to positive, detailed reporting of the child's progress and needs. Perhaps even more important than the teacher's sharing of information with the parent is the opportunity for the teacher to learn more about the individual child. Parents have a great fund of information which will help the teacher. The child's developmental history often yields invaluable clues related to his school adjustment. Further, conferences offer an opportunity for the teacher to learn of the attitudes, expectations, and feelings which parents have toward the child and toward the teacher and school.

Parental points of view are a powerful factor in shaping the behavior and attitudes of children. Parents' expectations for their children and their reactions to their successes and failures will be conditioned in great measure by the outcomes of conferencing.

Most parents respect the school and teacher and will approach a conference with a cooperative attitude. The face-to-face relationship which is established in a conference situation can do much to bring about the mutual help that pupils need to achieve the highest degree of success. It is with this philosophy in mind that the following guidelines and suggestions are offered.

ROBERT E. KELLY
Superintendent of Schools

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gratitude is expressed to the persons who contributed to the development of these guidelines, the accompanying conference record sheets for teachers, and the brochure for parents. Special appreciation is also conveyed to those teachers and administrators who have "pioneered" the conference approach to evaluation in the Los Angeles City School system and who have shared the results of their efforts. Included in this group are the staffs of the following schools:

Cabrillo Avenue School
Dixie Canyon School
Eastman Avenue School
Justice Street School
Lillian Street School
Sherman Oaks School

Acknowledgment is also extended to the school staffs in Elementary Area East, who initiated widespread use of "parent conversations" during the spring semester, 1970, and who provided "feedback" that was included in the development of these materials.

Contributions of the following members of the Committee for Reporting Pupil Progress in Elementary Schools are particularly acknowledged:

Mrs. Ann Burke, Parent, Del Amo School
Mr. Rene Chargois, Teacher, Hammel Street School
Mrs. Elizabeth Culley, Principal, Franklin Avenue School
Mrs. Alice Hood, Teacher, Prairie Avenue School
Mrs. Solveig Leslie, Teacher, Sherman Oaks School
Mrs. Faye Miller, Teacher, Pinewood Avenue School
Mrs. Jane Putman, Principal, Gulf Avenue School
Mrs. Ella Washington, Teacher, 97th Street School
Mr. Fred Zusman, Teacher, Grand View Boulevard School

Dr. Jack McClellan, Area Superintendent, Elementary Area Harbor, served as chairman of the committee, while Dr. Donald Kincaid, Director of Elementary Guidance and Counseling, was a resource person.

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PART I

TEACHER PREPARATION

Many important matters need to be considered by a teacher prior to initiating a conference with a parent and/or pupil regarding progress. In this section, some of the steps are suggested. Although they may appear to be obvious, collectively the suggestions should be helpful.

1. Study the child's cumulative record and other permanent resource materials for background data.

   - Results of standardized tests
   - Results of individual tests
   - Results of teacher observations regarding growth and development
   - Reports of significant health problems

2. Study anecdotal records.

   - Behavior patterns in the classroom and on school grounds
   - Other objective statements

3. Observe the child's attitudes toward other children and their attitudes toward him.

   - In the classroom
   - On the playground
   - In activities of a cooperative nature not under direct teacher guidance

4. Compile a collection of the child's work.

   - Work representative of his successes
   - Work representative of his daily performance
   - Work representative of areas in which he needs to improve

5. Conduct an informal inventory test or interview.

   - Child's areas of interest
   - Child's areas of concern, both academic and non-academic

6. Consult with other teachers who may be with the child during part of the day.

   - Speech teacher
   - Opportunity-room teacher
   - Counselor
   - Reading teacher

7. Consider the value of including the child as a participant in the conference.

   - One approach would be to confer with the parent, or parents, first, inviting the pupil to participate when mutual understanding and agreement have been reached.
   - Another approach would be to conduct the conference with the child only, suggesting that the parent participate as an observer. Afterward, meet with the parent alone to "sum up" the results of the conference.
   - Assure that neither the child nor the parent is intimidated by the approach utilized.

Teacher Preparation

8. Determine conference objectives.

   . Identify specific strengths of the child.
   . Identify areas in which improvement is needed.
   . Suggest ways in which the parent can help the child.
   . Determine what information should be gained regarding the child.
   . Develop plans to help the pupil succeed.

9. Become aware of supplementary services that can be used to help the child.

   . Nurse or doctor
   . Counselor
   . Posture teacher
   . Community agencies

10. Review the conference record sheet prior to the conference.
    (Refer to samples on pages 6-7, 9-10, 11-13, and 17-19.)

11. Determine whether or not a third party is needed to assist with interpretation or communication during the conference.

   . Interpreter
   . Principal or vice-principal
   . Counselor
   . Nurse or doctor
   . Member of welfare and attendance staff
   . Other staff member

PART II

CONDUCTING THE CONFERENCE

Teachers will utilize their own strengths and special resources in conducting the conference. They will discover effective ways of encouraging parents and/or pupils to participate. They will find their own unique approaches to expressing their hopes and concerns about individual children. In addition, teachers will contribute their own valuable ideas regarding ways in which pupils may be assisted toward improvement.

The following guidelines are suggested to assist in increasing the effectiveness of communication during the conference:

1. Establish a warm, open atmosphere.

   - Since the conference usually takes place in a classroom, the teacher may wish to avoid sitting behind a desk to establish a more comfortable relationship with other participants.

   - Every effort should be made to relieve anxiety on the part of each participant.

   - A "permissive" atmosphere should encourage the parent and/or pupil to discuss anything considered to be important. This approach can lead to a more open discussion of conference objectives.

   - The discussion should lead gradually to a review of the pupil's strengths and/or areas of need. Positive accomplishments of the child should be stressed wherever possible. Samples of the pupil's classwork will be helpful resources.

2. Listen to the parent and/or pupil.

   - Often, conference participants will offer the teacher insight which will be of invaluable assistance.

   - The parent may share concerns similar to those of the teacher and may be the first to suggest solutions to problems.

   - The teacher should accept what other participants say without disapproving or exhibiting shock.

   - Disagreement during the discussion can cause resentment and impede the flow of ideas.

3. Remember that the responsibility for achievement of conference objectives rests primarily with the teacher.

   - Although the parent should not be deterred from introducing other matters, the teacher should be cautious in allowing the discussion to be "sidetracked" into topics not pertinent to helping the youngster.

Conducting The Conference

. Planning steps suggested in Part I, including use of conference record sheets and establishing of objectives, will facilitate achieving the purposes of the conference.

4. Suggest areas in which the pupil may improve his performance.

. Possible approaches to this task are suggested in Parts IV and V of these guidelines.

. Suggestions should provide the parent, teacher, and/or child with tangible steps to be taken that will result in improvement of the pupil's progress.

. Assure that the results of the conference are treated in a confidential manner.

5. During the conference, the teacher performs a role similar to that of a physician or lawyer. Therefore, the results should be discussed only with those persons who are in a position to assist the pupil.

. Matters of critical importance should be reported to the principal.

6. At the conclusion of the conference, seek to maintain a feeling of mutual help and cooperative planning.

. Immediate and/or long-range plans should be the joint responsibility of all conference participants.

. A tentative date for a "follow-up" conference should be established.

. The parent and/or pupil should leave with the understanding that they may make an appointment to consult with the teacher during official conference periods or at such other times as may be convenient.

. It may be appropriate for the teacher to summarize results of the conference to verify that they are mutually understood. The following points might be covered:

- Restate the specific purposes of the conference.

- Recall points of mutual agreement.

- Review specific steps to be taken by the teacher in facilitating the pupil's progress.

- Review those tasks requiring follow-through on the part of the parent and/or pupil.

- If in accordance with the school's reporting plan and/or the parent's preference, provide the parent with a copy of the conference record sheet.

PART III

CONDUCTING THE GROUP CONFERENCE

On some occasions, teachers meet with groups of parents, perhaps in conjunction with a "back to school" night or similar event. Many teachers also hold periodic group meetings throughout the year to keep parents informed regarding the educational program. In the conduct of conferences of this type, the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Prepare displays or exhibits of interest to parents.
   - Display of textbooks and other instructional materials used in the classroom
   - Bulletin board exhibits featuring various aspects of the instructional program
   - Learning centers with an explanation of their purposes
   - Charts or chalkboard summaries to illustrate the daily program as well as special class projects and other types of classroom activities
2. Select appropriate topics for discussion.
   - Daily or weekly instructional program
   - Long-range plans in selected areas of the curriculum
   - Instructional materials used in the classroom
   - Characteristics and needs of pupils and their growth and development patterns
   - Homework policies
   - Suggestions for parents who wish to assist at home
   - Explanation of the testing program
3. Allow time during the conference for answering questions of a general nature.
4. Avoid discussion of individual children during a group conference.
   - Parents who wish to pursue questions about their children should be invited to make an appointment with the teacher at a later time.
   - A sign-up sheet might be provided for this purpose.

PART IV

CONFERENCE RECORD SHEETS, KINDERGARTEN

Two types of conference record sheets are available to Kindergarten teachers. Form number 34E97 (below) is based upon a "narrative" approach, in which the teacher writes comments related to various aspects of the child's social and academic growth. Form number 34E98 (page 9) is a "checklist" for teachers who prefer a more concise record. Schools may order either form from the Business Division. Each form is printed on sensitized paper and has a duplicate copy attached. One copy can be retained for the pupil's permanent file, while the other copy may be given to the parent.

Sample

KINDERGARTEN CONFERENCE RECORD SHEET (NARRATIVE)

Child's Name_____ Date_____

School_____ Teacher_____

I. Social Growth

A. Attitudes_____

_____

_____

B. Work Habits_____

_____

_____

C. Cooperation_____

_____

_____

D. Other Areas_____

_____

_____

II. Academic Growth

A. English Skills (including reading)_____

_____

_____

B. Number Skills_____

_____

_____

C. Other Skills_____

_____

_____

_____

III. Suggestions:_____

_____

_____

_____

Attendance: Days Present_____
Days Absent _____

Promoted to_____
(June only)

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Planning and Research
Form No. 34-E-97 200 M 9/70
1970 (Stock No. 33-813706)

Note to School Staffs:
This form may be reordered from the Business Division as a standard supply item.

Since knowledge of pupil strengths and needs is crucial to the success of a conference, the teacher may choose to record observations of them on the narrative form of the record sheet. The following notations which relate to social and academic growth may be helpful.

I. Social Growth

A. Attitudes

- Self-concept
- Relationships with other pupils
- Participation in classroom activities
- Response to suggestions
- Approach to new tasks and problems
- Acceptance of responsibility
- Self-confidence

B. Work Habits

- Use of materials
- Ability to "stick" to a job

Conference Record Sheets, Kindergarten

- . Initiative in approaching tasks and problems
- . Care of own belongings
- . Participation in planning activities

C. Cooperation

- . Observance of school and class standards
- . Respect for rights and property of other pupils
- . Willingness to share materials
- . Awareness of "right" and "wrong" behavior
- . Judgment on the playground and in class

II. Academic Growth

A. English Skills

- . Listening skills
- . Recall of material presented orally, including directions
- . Ability to express ideas orally
- . Ability to speak in complete sentences
- . Observance of details in pictures and other visual materials
- . Ability to recall sequence
- . Dictation of ideas and stories
- . Left-to-right eye movement
- . Top-to-bottom eye movement
- . Recognition of rhyming elements in words
- . Recognition of letters of the alphabet
- . Recognition of letter sounds, particularly initial and final consonants
- . Development of vocabulary
- . Recognition of basic shapes

Conference Record Sheets, Kindergarten

B. Number Skills

- Use of numerals for identification purposes: telephone number, address, age, date, time
- Use of quantitative terms: more, less, same, fewer
- Recognition of geometric shapes
- Understanding of numerals 1-10 and above
- Ability to read and write numerals 1-10 and above
- Understanding of sets and set relationships

C. Other Skills

- Physical coordination
- Curiosity about the world around him
- Interest in interaction of larger community
- Awareness of basic needs of mankind
- Understanding of effects of environment on man
- Understanding of need for rules
- Understanding of cause and effect relationships
- Participation in experiments
- Participation in classroom discussions
- Participation in independent exploration

Sample

KINDERGARTEN CONFERENCE RECORD SHEET (CHECKLIST)

Child's Name_____ Date_____

School_____ Teacher_____

I. Social Growth	Doing Well	Needs Help
A. Relationships with Others	_____	_____
B. Participation in Classroom Activities	_____	_____
C. Acceptance of Responsibility	_____	_____

D. Degree of Self-confidence _____ _____
E. Degree of Initiative _____ _____
F. Observance of Standards _____ _____
G. Respect for Rights and Property of Others _____ _____
H. Willingness to Share _____ _____
I. Other Areas (identified by teacher) _____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

J. Suggestions: _____

_____

_____

II. Academic Growth

A. Physical Coordination Skills _____ _____
B. General Readiness Skills _____ _____
C. Interest in World About Him _____ _____
D. Interest and Involvement with Pictures, Puzzles, Books _____ _____
E. Listening Skills _____ _____
F. Skills Requiring Oral Expression _____ _____
G. Skills Requiring Recognition of Sounds, Letters, and Words _____ _____
H. Understanding of Numbers from 1-10 and Above _____ _____
I. Skill in Recognition and Use of Numbers from 1-10 and Above _____ _____
J. Other Skills (identified by teacher) _____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

K. Suggestions: _____

_____

_____

Attendance: Days Present _____
Days Absent _____

Promoted to _____ (June only)

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Planning and Research
Form No. 34E98 200 M 9/70
1970 (Stock No. 33-813707)

Note to School Staffs:
This form may be reordered from the Business Division as a standard supply item.

PART V

CONFERENCE RECORD SHEETS, GRADES 1-2

In addition to the conference record sheets provided for Kindergarten, two forms have been developed for use with children enrolled in Grades 1-2. Form number 34E99 (below) is based upon a "narrative" approach, in which the teacher writes comments related to various aspects of the child's social and academic growth. Form number 34E100 (pages 17-19) is a "checklist" for teachers who prefer a more concise record. Schools may order either form from the Business Division. As with the Kindergarten conference sheets, two copies are provided, using sensitized paper. One copy may be filed with the child's permanent records, while the other copy may be given to the parent if desired.

Sample

CONFERENCE RECORD SHEETS, GRADES 1-2 (NARRATIVE)

Child's Name_____ Date_____

School_____ Teacher_____

I. Social Growth

A. Relationships with Others

_____

B. Observance of Classroom and School Standards

_____

C. Success in Providing Self-direction

_____

D. Other Areas of Social Growth

_____

E. Suggestions Related to Social Growth

_____

II. Academic Growth

A. Growth in English

. Listening Skills_____

_____

. Speaking Skills_____

_____

- Reading Skills_____

_____

- Handwriting Skills_____

_____

- Spelling Skills_____

_____

- Composition Skills_____

_____

B. Growth in Mathematics

- Conceptual Skills_____

_____

- Operational Skills_____

_____

- Problem-solving Skills_____

_____

C. Growth in Social Sciences

- Interest and Involvement in Content_____

_____

- Understanding of Skills and Concepts_____

_____

D. Growth in Science

- Interest and Involvement in Content_____

_____

- Skill in Processes of Experimental Inquiry_____

_____

E. Growth in Fine Arts

- Aesthetic Appreciation_____

_____

- Skill in Creative Expression_____

_____

F. Growth in Health and Safety

. Understanding and Application of Health Practices_____

_____

. Understanding and Application of Safety Practices_____

_____

G. Growth in Physical Education

. Participation in Activities_____

_____

_____

. Development of Skills_____

_____

H. Suggestions Related to Academic Growth

_____

_____

_____

Attendance: Days Present_____
Days Absent _____

Promoted to_____
(June only)

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Planning and Research
Form No. 34E99 400 M 9/70
1970 (Stock No. 33-813708)

Note to School Staffs:
This form may be reordered from the Business Division as a standard supply item.

Teachers may wish to refer to the following areas of social and academic growth in recording evaluations on the narrative form of the record sheet:

I. Social Growth

A. Relationships with others

. Self-concept

. Acceptance by classmates

. Leadership qualities

. Fairness in dealing with others

. Consideration of others

. Respect for rights and property of others

. Reaction to constructive criticism

B. Observance of classroom and school rules

- Participation in establishment of standards
- Success in following directions
- Dependence upon adult direction
- Self-discipline and self-control
- General cooperation

C. Success in providing self-direction

- Initiative
- Self-confidence
- Ability to work independently
- Approach to new tasks and situations
- Use of time
- Completion of work
- Ability to improvise

II. Academic Growth

A. Growth in English

1. Listening Skills

- Listening to other persons
- Following oral directions
- Enjoyment of material presented orally
- Recall of sequence of ideas or facts presented orally

2. Speaking Skills

- Fluency in oral expression
- Organization of ideas
- Use of standard English
- Participation in classroom discussions

Conference Record Sheets, Grades 1-2

3. Reading Skills
   - Use of word-attack skills
   - Understanding of what is read
   - Ability to interpret and to make inferences
   - Use of reference skills
   - Independence in reading
   - Enjoyment of reading
4. Handwriting Skills
   - Motor coordination
   - Use of correct letter forms
   - Neatness
5. Spelling Skills
   - Ease with which words are spelled
   - Performance in spelling activities
   - Application of spelling skills in written work
6. Composition Skills
   - Use of standard English
   - Use of well-constructed sentences
   - Creativity
   - Organization of ideas
   - Understanding of mechanics of writing

B. Growth in Mathematics
1. Knowledge of number system
2. Understanding of number concepts
3. Ability in computational skills
4. Ability in measurement skills
5. Application of mathematical concepts to real-life situations
6. Ability in problem solving

Conference Record Sheets, Grades 1-2

C. Growth in Social Sciences

1. Interest and participation
2. Understanding of interrelationships among people
3. Appreciation for people of other cultures
4. Use of research skills
5. Use of materials, such as maps and globes

D. Growth in Science

1. Interest and participation
2. Involvement in science projects
3. Use of research skills
4. Understanding of scientific processes

E. Growth in Fine Arts

1. Interest and participation
2. Enjoyment of fine arts activities
3. Creative expression

F. Growth in Health and Safety

1. Practice of personal hygiene
2. Understanding and application of good health and safety habits
3. Awareness of preventive health and safety practices

G. Growth in Physical Education

1. Interest and participation
2. Motor coordination
3. Ability in various skill activities
4. Team effort and sportsmanship

Sample

CONFERENCE RECORD SHEET, GRADES 1-2 (CHECKLIST)

Child's Name_____ Date_____

School_____ Teacher_____

I. Social Growth	Doing Well	Needs Help
A. Relationships with Others		
B. Observance of Classroom and School Standards		
C. Success in Providing Self-direction		
D. Other Areas of Social Growth (identified by teacher)		
E. Suggestions Related to Social Growth:		

II. Academic Growth

A. Growth in English		
1. Listening Skills		
2. Speaking Skills		
3. Reading Skills		
4. Handwriting Skills		
5. Spelling Skills		
6. Composition Skills		
7. Suggestions Related to English Skills:		

B. Growth in Mathematics

1. Conceptual Skills _____ _____
2. Operational Skills _____ _____
3. Problem-solving Skills _____ _____
4. Suggestions Related to Mathematics Skills: _____

_____

_____

C. Growth in Social Sciences

1. Interest and Involvement in Content _____ _____
2. Understanding of Skills and Concepts _____ _____

D. Growth in Science

1. Interest and Involvement in Content _____ _____
2. Skill in Processes of Experimental Inquiry _____ _____

E. Growth in Fine Arts

1. Aesthetic Appreciation _____ _____
2. Skill in Creative Expression _____ _____

F. Growth in Health and Safety

1. Understanding and Application of Health Practices _____ _____
2. Understanding and Application of Safety Practices _____ _____

G. Growth in Physical Education

1. Participation in Activities _____ _____
2. Development of Skills _____ _____

H. Other Areas of Growth (identified by teacher) _____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

I. Suggestions Related to Items C.-H.: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attendance: Days Present_____
Days Absent _____

Promoted to_____
(June only)

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Planning and Research
Form No. 34E100 400 M 9/70
1970 (Stock No. 33-813709)

Note to School Staffs:
This form may be reordered from the Business Division as a standard supply item.

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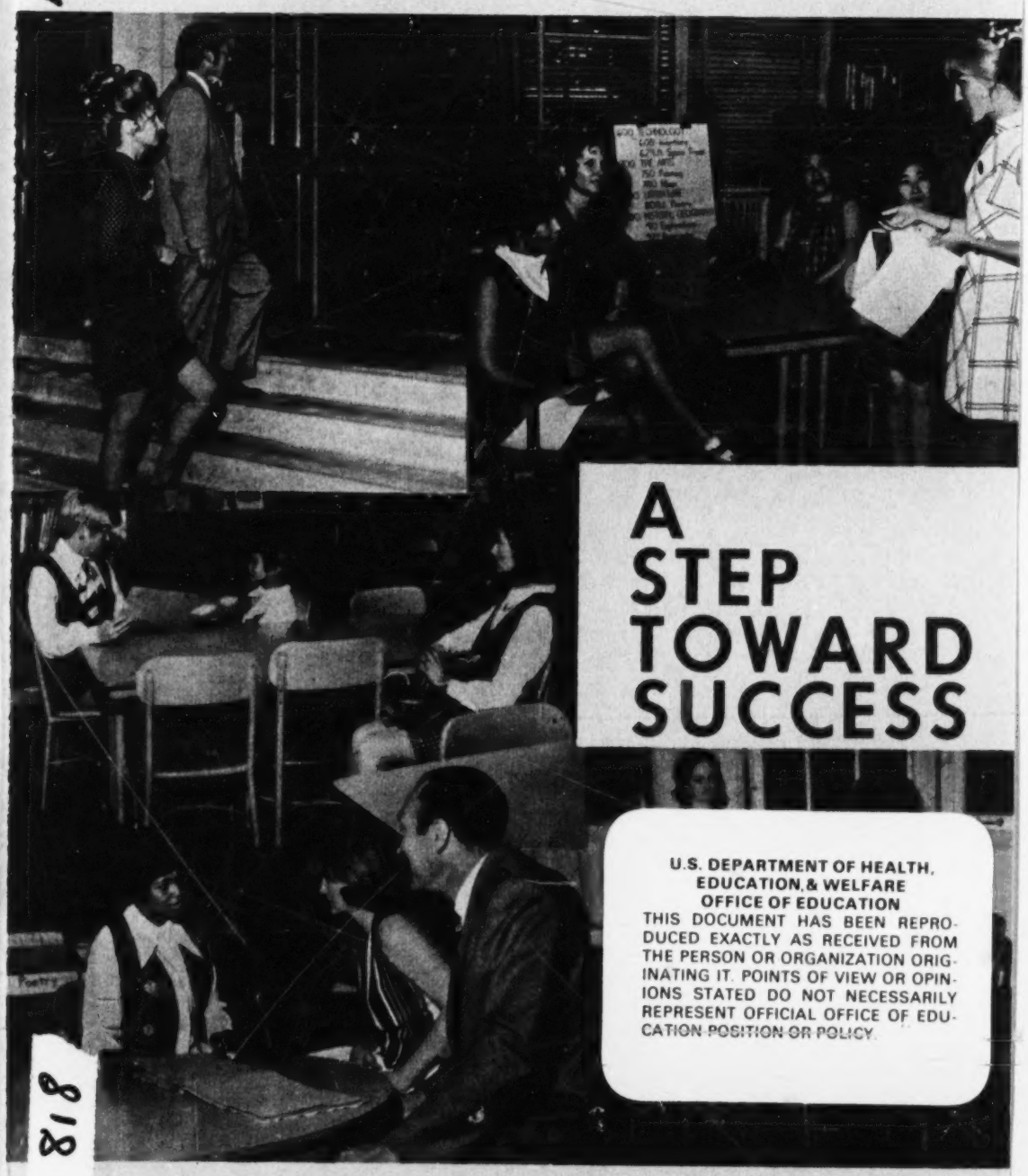

A STEP TOWARD SUCCESS

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LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Planning and Research
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Dear Parents:

The need for improved communication with parents and pupils is a major concern of school personnel, and nowhere is this need more evident than in reporting pupil progress. An important part of this process is conferencing, an idea which is not new to our school system. For years, teachers have been meeting with pupils, with parents, with both pupils and parents, and with groups of parents.

It is recognized that this is an important way of exchanging information and of providing for two- or three-way communication. Conferencing is considered especially effective in helping children in the primary grades to make a successful start in school.

This leaflet points out some of the ways in which parents, pupils, and teachers may work cooperatively to help children. Hopefully, the leaflet also will help improve the evaluation and reporting of pupil progress.

ROBERT E. KELLY
Superintendent of Schools

PREPARATION FOR A CONFERENCE

The chief objectives of reporting pupil progress are (1) to make an assessment of the pupil's growth in learning and (2) to plan further activities that will result in the pupil's continued progress and success.

Be they parents, teachers, or pupils themselves, those who share in conferencing must prepare carefully to assure that the child benefits to the fullest extent possible. The following suggestions will help both parents and teachers in preparing for a conference.

You may wish to discuss:

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

Your child's reaction to school

Aspects of his home life which might affect his learning

Your child's special interests and abilities

Special needs and problems about which the teacher should be aware

Other matters of special concern to you

TOPICS FOR THE TEACHER

The child's response to the school environment: to other children, to success or difficulty in his work, to normal interruptions and other typical situations

His class work

His apparent strengths, as well as areas needing improvement

The instructional program, including the materials which the child is using

After a conference, parents and teachers will wish to "follow through," using steps like those suggested on the next page.

FOLLOW-THROUGH: A NECESSARY STEP

Action taken after a conference may very well determine the actual benefit to the child. When a session has been productive, the conference participants will leave with a positive outlook, one which focuses on the child's achievements and successes rather than on his failures. On the other hand, it is essential that the parent, teacher, and pupil have a clear understanding of steps which need to be taken to help the child reach his fullest development.

Steps like the following will assist in achieving this goal:

- Determine the skills in which the child needs help. Specify the materials and methods needed for this purpose.
- Plan specific kinds of enrichment activities to assist the child in capitalizing on his needs, interests, and abilities.
- Plan to take advantage of extra opportunities for learning in the school or community, such as tutorial or afterschool programs, and guidance, health, and other services.
- Plan for a follow-up conference to evaluate present plans and to consider what steps should be taken in the future.

Parents should remember that the school staff is vitally concerned about the progress of each child. A parent need not wait for a formal conference to meet with a teacher, the principal, or others who are responsible for the child's education. Staff members look forward to helping parents and pupils.